



Madame La Valliere



Madame La Valliere

65

u

of the Church of England.
Lewis A. Aubrey, Secy.

A broken and a contrite Heart, O God, thou wilt not despise, Psal. 51. 17.

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The Preface.

'T Is a common Saying, confirm'd by experience, *That Example is far more prevalent than Precept*; and the Reason is, because the one seems to be *the transcript of our Mind*, whereas 'tis evident that the other is too often bias'd by

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Interest, and an over-
weaning conceit of
our own Sufficiency.
For *Pride* and *Vain-*
glory may incline that
Man to recommend
Mortification and *Re-*
pentance , and extol
even the *Stoicism* of
Cato , who privately
hugs and caresses his
darling *Lust* and leads
a Life more luxurious
than *Sardanapalus* : but
he

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he who in the vigour
of his Youth and the
full career of Pleasure
sets bounds to his
inordinate *Appetites*,
who retires from the
World and its *Va-*
nities, before they
leave him; he plainly
demonstrates, that
there is some more
sublime Happiness he
pursues after, some
more perfect *Good*

A 3 which

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which attracts his Affections. And therefore one great end of our Saviour's coming into the World was to be a *Pattern of Holy Living and Dying*, to convince us, that notwithstanding the Infirmities of our *Nature*, the most stubborn *Lusts* may be subdu'd, the most alluring *Temptations* may be

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be *resisted*, and Gospel-
obedience may be per-
form'd if we call in
his *Grace* to the as-
sistance of our *honest*
endeavours. God re-
quires nothing of us
but what is highly
just and *reasonable*,
what he gives us
power to *perform*;
and in *Ages* of the
World he sets before
our eyes the *Examples*

A 4 of

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of some *Heroick Souls*,
who bravely conquer
those *Armado's* of
Temptations we are apt
to fancy *invincible*,
and prefer the igno-
miny of the *Cross*,
before the most luscious
gratifications of
sence. In the first rank
of these, I may place
this *Penitent Lady*, the
Authoreſs of these *de-*
vout Reflections, which
I hope

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I hope will find the better entertainment in our *English* Nation, because Translated from the *French* ; for since we are so foolishly fond of the *Apes* and *Peacocks*, the *Modes* and *Vanities* of that People, I have no reason to fear that their *Gold* will be an unacceptable Present. It may perhaps be

A 5 ex-

The Preface.

expected that I should
give an Account of
the former Life of this
devout Convert , but
since that is already

* The History
of the Amours
of the *French*-
Court.

done in ano-
ther * Book,
by a light &
trivial Pen, I shall not
intermix any part of
it with so grave
and serious a Subject ;
besides, the Publisher
of these Papers, in the
Original seems mo-

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deftly to decline it.

'Twill more nearly concern us curiously to pry into our *hearts*, to *examine what sins we have been guilty of*, to *imitate her Repen-*
tance, and seriously to Meditate on these *Pious Reflections*, which, like the Nails in the Hand of *Jael*, may with the *Assistance of the Holy Spirit*, fasten
our

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*our Corruptions to the
feet of Christ's Cross.*

I foresee it will be
objected, that this Pi-
cture is copied from
a *Popish* Original. And
truly 'twas this Con-
sideration which for
some time diverted
my Resolutions of
making it publick ;
but after I have several
times carefully re-
view'd it, I cannot
discover

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discover the least stroke or Liniment of so Monstrous a Parent, but rather stand amaz'd, that this precious *Jewel* should be found on the dung-hil of the *Romish-Church*. I am heartily convinc'd, that the *Principles* of that Perswasion tend to the encouragement of *Vice*, and the promoting

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ting *Debauchery*, and therefore am astonish'd at this *Miracle of God's Mercy*, which from so corrupt a Tree has produc'd such *Good Fruit*. For my part, I am apt to think, that either her Mind was extraordinarily enlighten'd, or else that by the very light of Nature she discover'd the pernicious

The Preface.

cious Tenents of that Church.

And this may serve to instruct us, that the influences of God's *Holy Spirit* are not confin'd to so narrow a Sphere as some mens uncharitableness would suggest, but that *in every Nation he that feareth God and worketh Righteousness shall be accepted of him.*
Those

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Those who are of a contrary Opinion would do well to transmit to Posterity some more eminent Examples of Penitence, and genuine Instances of fervent Devotion. And in the mean while, let me beseech them to look over these Papers, to conform their Lives to the Practice of
of

The Preface.

of the Truths contain'd therein ; lest at the *last Day* they should see *Publicans* and *Harlots* enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, whilst they themselves are shut out.

The

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Advertisement.

I *T was the Saying of a Father of the Church, That 'tis more easie to find out a Man who has preserv'd his Innocency from his Baptism, than a sincere and hearty Penitent ; Because few are Converted as they ought to be : Nevertheless, God, out of his infinite Goodness and Compassion, does from time to time turn the Hearts of some Prodigious Sinners ; demonstrating to the World, that he is truly*

B

a God

An Advertisement.

a God of Mercy, and that there is no Man who has been never so desperately Wicked, but he will receive him, if he returns with a heart truly sensible of his Offences. He does not desire the Death of a Sinner, for he came to lay down his Life for such, but only that they would be Converted and live. Now if the whole Church stood amaz'd at the Conversion of a Prince whose Devotion was not surpass'd by the austerest Votaries of the times he liv'd in: We have no less reason to admire this of a Lady, whom the Mercy of God singled out from a debauch'd Age, the affluence of all sinful Pleasures to be a Miracle of Penitence.

For

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For it will be easie to judge by these Pious Reflections, (which are now made Publick, and were Compos'd after her Retirement from the World, and Recovery from a dangerous fit of Sicknes) that her Soul was deeply affected with a Divine Love; and that by how much the more earnest she was in the pursuit of sinful Pleasures, and forgetful of her Eternal Welfare, by so much the more she is at present Inspir'd with the Love of God, and desires Life it self, for no other purpose, than to get an Interest in her Saviour's Merits, and to blot out the Infamy of her former Life, by a sincere Repentance. Her Name is conceal'd out of

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*respect to her Modesty and Humility, which would never have permitted these Papers to have been Printed, had they not been convey'd away by a vertuous Lady, who esteem'd it a great piece of Injustice to with-hold so profitable an Help from those poor Souls who are desirous to Reform their Lives and bid Adieu to their Vicious Conversations. For tho' several Books have been written on this Subject, yet she look'd upon this as the best Model'd and Pen'd with the most Divine and Moving Expressions that ever she saw. God grant that they who Read these Lines may be Inspired with the same Thoughts this Devout Soul was; That
those*

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*those who have been guilty of
the same Sins, may imitate
her Repentance, and Husband
that Time which the Mercy of
God has prolonged to them, in
considering what will conduce
to the advantage of their Im-
mortal Souls.*

B 3 REFLE-

REFLECTIONS

ON THE

Mercy of G O D,

In Form of Prayers.

REFLECTION I.

*Upon our Obligations to Consecrate
that Life to God's Glory, which
we hold from his Mercy, and the
Care we ought to take, lest we
should be Insnar'd into Sin.*

WHat shall I render unto
my God, for giving me
Life and Health, for
Reprieving me from the Gates
of Hell and Preserving my Soul;

B 4

and

and in short , for all those Favours which he has vouchsafed to me his poor Servant ?

Shall it suffice, O my God, to acknowledge thy Benefits? will it be any recompence, to employ the remainder of that time in thy service, which hitherto has been spent in affronting thy Majesty? or will the divorcing those unlawful Pleasures, to which I have been formerly wedded, satisfy thy Justice, and blot out my Transgressions? In short, will it be sufficient to secure me from Eternal Misery, that henceforward I will aspire after nothing but Eternal Happiness, the fruition of thy self, and those ravishing pleasures which are at thy right - hand for evermore?

Grant that thy Rays may enlighten my Reason, and that thy Grace may penetrate my Soul ;
help

help me out of the deplorable estate into which I am fallen, and inspire me with Faith to pray unto thee ; and, good God, suffer me not to fall into such a Lethargy as may render me unmindful of my Souls health, or sleep the sleep of Eternal Death.

Oh let me never forget that dreadful hour, when thou cald'st me to an account for my sins ; when I beheld Death ready to seize upon my soul and carry it into everlasting torments ; and let thy infinite compassion be deeply engraven upon my memory , which in the midst of Judgment did remember Mercy, and rescue me from thy fiery Indignation.

Oh that the Joy which fills my Soul for the return of my Health, may not Juggle out thy Grace, and Reconcile me to the World ; that those vain *Idea's* of Sensual

Pleasure, may be quite ras'd out of my fancy, and never re-assume the place of those solid Truths, which by thy Mercy are written there.

REFLECT. II.

She Prays unto God, to strengthen her Resolutions, and to enable her to approach unto him with a pure heart.

Restore unto me, O my God the health of my Soul, and enable me to desire of thee, above all things, that Holy Joy which the vicissitudes of these sublunary things cannot deprive me of; I mean the Joy to see myself redeem'd from the slavery of sin, in a state of salvation and led by the hand of thy Divine Providence, to my Heavenly

Canaan.

Canaan. Season also my Heart with thy Grace, that Spirit and Principle of Action, which, having wash'd us clean in the Blood of our Saviour, furnishes us with strength to persevere to the end in the way of his Commandments.

For alas ! what will become of those Vows which I made unto thee, when I was surrounded with Fear, and in danger of losing my Soul ; I say, what will become of them, unless thou, O Lord, out of the abundance of thy Mercy art pleas'd to imprint them on my mind, fix them in my thoughts, and enable me to conquer the Temptations of my visible and invisible Enemies, who use all means possible, either to terrifie, or to decoy me into sin.

O Lord, who succourest the Poor, and takest pleasure in those
that

that come unto thee with Faith, and with an humble and contrite Heart ; We acknowledge our selves to be weak and miserable Creatures, and relie wholly upon thy Grace, the proper Medicine to heal and comfort us. *Search my Heart and try my Reins,* and grant me that infallible Medicine which dispels the most contagious fumes of sin ; which will sanctifie my Soul, and preserve it safe unto Everlasting Life.

But grant me also, O my God, that whilst I beg these Blessings of thee, I maybe endow'd with such a frame of mind, and such other qualifications, as encline thee to say, *Amen,* to my Petitions.

Prepare your selves, O my Body, my Spirit, and my Soul, by the assistance of God's grace, to appear before your Master and your God ; to the end that
he

he may apply that Divine Medicine which will make you whole.

For how dare I approach the Holy of Holies, without preparation, and intrude my self a most miserable sinner into the presence of my God?

Therefore, O Lord, make me sensible of my want and misery, of thy Majesty and Love, before I come to this Heavenly Banquet, where I shall eat and drink, either my Eternal Health, or Damnation.

REFLECT.

REFLECT. III.

Upon those Vertues which are necessary for our approaching unto Christ ; from the Example of the Canaanite , the Samaritan, and Mary Magdalen.

TEach me in the trouble of my Spirit , and anguish of my Heart, with what degree of grief my Soul ought to be affected for its Offences against so great, so good a God ; and what purity of Body and Soul is required , that it may be filled with Divine shame.

How I may offer up a pure and agreeable Sacrifice to thee, having now a mind too much delighted in the vanities of the world, and a heart too much led away by them.

How

How I may lodge thee in the Temple of my Breast, from whence, with difficulty, I have just now chas'd thy most inveterate Enemies.

In short, the Way for a Notorious Sinner, who is without Repentance and without Love, to be made partaker of that Christ who was crucified for him, is, to defer coming to the Table of the Lord, until he is duly prepared, lest he commit the most hainous Sacrilege. Inspire me then with such a hatred of sin, as may confirm my resolutions to abstain from every thing that displeaseth thee, and with passionate desires to love thee alone.

Give me that humble and contrite spirit whose groans thou dost never refuse; I would say, Inspire me by thy Grace, with the self-same dispositions with
which

which the poor *Canaanite* prostrated her self at thy feet

Look upon me, O Lord, whilst I approach unto thee, as thou didst that humble stranger. I would say as a poor Dog, who is sufficiently happy, when permitted to pick up the Crumbs which fall from the Table where thou featest thine Elect.

Look with compassion upon this poor sinner, who, like the *Samaritan* woman, being inflamed with a sense of her sins, beseeches one drop of Living Water, to quench the fervour of her soul, and thirst of sin.

But above all, incline me to Imitate *Mary Magdalen*; with that holy Penitent, let me wipe thy Feet with my Tears, and by endeavouring to love thee much, in some measure answer thy love in forgiving me much.

Deal

Deal with me as thou hast dealt with these three Holy Women, whom thou hast made the living Witnesses of thy Mercy ; that by these Examples I may be taught what trust ought to be put in thy Goodness. Fit me , O Lord , for the approaching thy Table, and participating of thy Divine Mysteries. Give me a lively, humble and constant Faith, which may produce an Universal Obedience to thy Law , the solid foundation of my Eternal Welfare.

REFLECT.

REFLECT. IV.

Concerning the Constancy and Stability of the Faith, necessary to a Penitent Soul.

Give me therefore, O Lord, a lively Faith, which may animate all my Actions, and notwithstanding my weakness, nourish thy Love and thy Grace in my Soul. A stedfast Faith, whereby I may sincerely believe thy Holy Word, and when the World allures me with its temptations put me in mind, that no man can serve two Masters.

A humble Faith whereby I may discern that conformity to this World is the greatest impediment of my conformity unto Jesus Christ.

In fine, an enlightned Faith which may render the Grandeur
of

of this World contemptible to me, and demonstrate that the fashion of this World passes away, and that there is nothing solid and lasting, but God alone. For alas ! my best desires are fleeting and unconstant, like the flowers of the field, which to day are, and to morrow are cut down and wither.

O Lord, who art delighted in acts of Mercy, and who alone canst change the heart, turn my inconstancy into a steady resolution of serving thee, and my irregular passions into an earnest pursuit of thy love.

Let it not suffice me, that I am disgusted with worldly things, or perhaps estranged from them; this may proceed from a spirit of pride, or be the effort of my reason. But direct my ways and purifie my thoughts, that at the same time I am convinc'd of the
vanity

vanity and emptiness of earthly things, I may be also assisted with thy grace to return unto thee ; that my Heart being cleans'd, instead of those Legions of Vanities, which have formerly possess'd it, it may be consecrated a Holy Temple , and dedicated to the Service of my God.

Preserve me from the sweet poyson of the pleasures of this World, that sun-shine of Fortune, which sooner disrobes us of our Innocence, than the most severe blasts of Adversity. Let me look up unto no other God or Providence than thine alone.

Correct me, O Lord, but with the chastisement of a Son, which in the midst of the most glittering prosperity afflicts and humbles us, brings our hearts home unto thee, and convinces us that we are but Men ; that is to say, weak & feeble creatures, blinded by

by our passions, and subject to all sorts of misery.

Take away from me that inordinate love of my self, and that original corruption, from whence springs all my Misery; 'tis from this that instead of serving thee in Spirit and in Truth, instead of making thy Glory the end of all my thoughts, words and actions, I persue after nothing, but the gratification of my irregular Lusts.

Let me be never so rash and so ungrateful unto thee, O my God, as to fancy my self the Author of those Reflections, which I sometimes make, when I retire my self from the hurry of this World, wherein an unquencheable appetite torments the most happy persons, and renders them miserable slaves, even by the accomplishment of their most earnest desires.

REFLECT.

REFLECT. V.

*The Thoughts of a Penitent Soul,
fearful of being deceiv'd by the
Appearance of a False Conver-
sion.*

WHat am I, my Lord and
my God? what am I? but
a proud Atome, a poor, blind
creature, who continually goes
astray when thou withholdest the
Rays of thy Grace. I deserve to
be annihilated, if at any time I
should attempt the conversion of
my self, by my own power, with-
out the assistance of thy Grace.

Mortifie in my soul all vain
glory, every thing that tempts
me to too good an opinion of my
self; but chiefly that frothiness
of humour which serves only to
divert me from thy ways, to de-
prive me of the benefit of my af-
flictions

flitions, and the sweet comfort of thy Holy Spirit.

Give me humility and distrust of my own reason ; let me thirst after doing good more and carnal knowledge less ; lest valuing it more than thy grace, I lose my self ; and instead of becoming a good Christian, become a Philosopher ; better acquainted with the Maxims of *Aristotle* and *Descartes*, than ~~the~~ knowledge of the Cross.

O how vain and deceitful are the thoughts of man, unless govern'd by that Wisdom which is from above, by that Wisdom which is Foolishness to the World, because it is unacquainted with it ; by that Wisdom which God has concealed from the proud, and discovered to the humble ; by that Wisdom which laughs at humane subtilty, and acts only according to the grace
of

of Jesus Christ. In short, by that Wisdom which is produc'd by the Fear of God, and which is the beginning and the end of all true Wisdom.

Permit me not, O my God, to flatter my self, that I hate all sin, because I am perhaps restrained from Luxury and Passion; Let me not flatter my self, that I am taken off from loving the Creature, because my diversions are innocent.

Let me not flatter my self, that I have mortified my passions; for I find them revive with more strength than ever, and encline me to self-love; which is the more dangerous, because by justifying these irregular motions, it renders me deaf to the dictates of my reason, and the holy inspirations of thy grace.

Let me not fancy my self to be without pride, ambition, self-love,

love, because I despise the World,
and scorn to owe those Honours
Fortune has stripp'd me of, to
any thing else but my deserts.

Let me not so much deceive my
self, as to think I am thoroughly
converted, when indeed I have
only chang'd the sins of sense,
for those of the mind: A pro-
phane, proud, and sensual Life,
in which I was always tormented
by reflecting on my Crimes and
the remorse of my Conscience;
for a life in which my whole en-
deavour is to gratifie self-love,
and enjoy the pleasures of the
World; and in the mean while,
lose my precious time, forget my
God, hazard the salvation of my
soul, & obtain nothing but the Mo-
rality of a Heathen, which alone
will not save me at the day of Judg-
ment: O state, truly deplorable,
and the more so, because I am
not sensible of my condition, but

C

rest

rest satisfied without endeavouring after any other Repentance or Conversion.

REFLECT. VI.

Upon the Opposition of a Worldly Life to the suffering Life of Jesus Christ.

TEach man O Lord, that this sort of life is not the life of a Christian, and that the end of Christ's Death and Incarnation was not to instate us in a delicate and effeminate a life, and might gratifie sense and indulge the flesh; and that all Moral Vertues are but dead Works, unless enlivened by the Merits and Vertue of Jesus Christ.

That unless the inclinations of our hearts are changed, it will nothing avail a sinner to reform

his outward conversation, to hate the World without love to God, to do works of Justice, without sincere Repentance; and, as the Royal *Psalmist* has it, *to cease from evil without doing good.*

At the same time, O Lord, that thou destroyest my sinful Habits, Plant in my soul, such Graces as may be fruitful to Good Works. Grant that by a lively Faith I may meditate on the Mysteries of thy Life and Passion; That my soul may be deeply affected with them, and that it may be my greatest pleasure to contemplate those Sufferings which thou didst willingly undergo for my sake.

That beholding the Divine Infant lying on the Straw, and in a Manger, the Treasures of Heaven vailed in the Poverty of the Earth; I may condemn all

those Riches which endure but for a moment, and endeavour to obtain those incorruptible treasures, which *Moth and Rust do not corrupt, which will never fly away.*

That the consideration of that private life in which thou wast pleased to disguise thy self from the eyes of the World, may create in me a desire to be forgotten by it; that I may retire and employ my self only in the great business of my salvation.

That the receiving of thy holy body and precious blood, those sacred pledges of thy love, which thou wast pleas'd to leave us, when thou gavest thy life for our offences; may produce in me a holy horror at the consideration of the cause of thy Death, and a detestation of all sin.

That I may rejoice and be exceeding glad when I shall be disgrac'd

disgrac'd and contemned, remem-
bring my Saviour's humility, who
was set at nought by *Herod* and
the Court, where he never ap-
pear'd but once, and then on pur-
pose to be despised.

That those Scourges which
rent thy Sacred Body, those
Thorns which pierced thy Pre-
cious Head, may penetrate my
callous heart, render me truly
penitent, and willing, for the
love of thee, to undergo all those
rigours of Mortification and Self-
denial, which are requisite for the
subduing of our Lusts.

In fine, that the consideration
of thy ignominious death on the
Cross, on which thou perfectest
the work of my salvation in grief
and misery, may be my only hope.

REFLECT. VII.

*What the Hope of a Penitent Soul
ought to be.*

THIS is the second Favour I desire of thee for the Merits of that precious Blood which trickled from thy Sacred Wounds, and which thou didst offer to thy Eternal Father for the price of my Redemption.

That thou wouldst be pleas'd to give me a true hope in thy Mercies: I say, Lord, a true hope, because there is nothing more common, than to abuse thy Mercy, by making it an encouragement to sin more securely; then for sinners to hope in thy goodness, without so much as endeavouring to repent: and to go on in their sins with confidence of impunity, tho' hereby they
make

make God unjust, and rather the
refuge and confident of their
Crimes, than the true Protector
of Innocence and Vertue.

Now whilst thy Thunder has
awakned me, and thy Rod cor-
rected me.

Now whilst I am sensible of
the wickedness of my Life, the
dangerous condition of my Soul,
and am convinc'd that there is
a Heaven, a Hell, and an Eter-
nity.

Now whilst I am sensible that
those things which hitherto in-
chanted me, were but lying Va-
nities, whilst I am inflamed more
than ever with an ardent desire
of being sincerely converted unto
thee. Teach me, O Lord, that
as thou art a God full of Mercy
and Compassion to those sinners
who hope in thy Mercy, and re-
turn unto thee with all their
heart: so thou art a terrible God

to those who presume on it, only that they may multiply their offences, and after having tasted the sweet comforts of the Holy Spirit, scorn and neglect it. For it is not, Lord, of those miserable wretches, that thou sayest, *to those that knock it shall be opened.*

Is it not of these Miscreants of whom thou hast pronounc'd, *that thou wilt withdraw the Bowels of thy Mercy?*

Is it not against these impious persons thou hast threatned, *that thou wilt mock at their Calamity;* and that instead of finding at their last hour the compassionateness of a tender Father, they shall experience the Justice and Vengeance of an angry God?

REFLECT.

REFLECT. VIII.

What Effect a true Repentance ought to have upon our Conversations and what kind of Guide she ought to enquire after for the conduct of her Soul.

THAT I may avoid all the flatteries of Self-love, by which the Devil takes occasion to rob me of thy grace ; Grant, O my God, that instead of searching into my corruption for palliating Remedies to skin over my Sores, I may place my self at the Tribunal of thy Justice, and there apply those Causticks which are necessary to consume Gangrene and Rottenness of my Soul.

That is to say, Lord, permit me not to be deceived, or rather let me not take pleasure in deceiving my self; in fancying that

I shall make amends for such a Heathenish life as mine has been, such criminal and scandalous passions, whilst I continue in the same sinful Habits, the same Opportunities, the same Pleasures, and, perhaps, the same Crimes too.

Let me not add this to the heap of my sins ; to wit, the disbelief of thy Gospel, the interpreting it according to my fancy, or adapting it to countenance my Enormities.

Ah Lord ! how do I dishonour thee by my works , whilst my mouth praises thee ; whilst I boast that I am a Christian, I act contrary to thy holy Law, and every day renounce those Vows I made unto thee in my Baptism.

Ah Lord ! who punishest my ingratitude , by suffering me to fall from one Precipice to another , from a neglect of thy Grace,

Grace, to errour and hardness
 of heart. Permit me not to pitch
 upon a Mountebank, instead of
 an able Physician, who can apply
 proper Remedies to the invete-
 rate Maladies of my Soul; I would
 say, Lord, let me find a learned,
 prudent, and pious Guide, who
 can inform my Judgment, and
 understands when to Absolve me;
 and not a blind or a deceitful
 Guide, who corrupts thy Holy
 Word, bends the Rule to my
 lusts, rather than conforms me to
 it, and endeavours more to please
 than save me; who by a too
 speedy administration of abso-
 lution, lulls me into a false peace,
 becomes the partner of my sin,
 the cause of my Damnation, and
 an instrument of the Devil, rather
 than the servant of Jesus Christ.
 For, O Lord, in that day, when
 all the secrets of our hearts, and
 all the evasions of self-love shall
 be

be laid open ; thou wilt not then judge me by the Maxims of my ghostly Guide , but by thy holy Gospel , and that light which thou hast given me, which I have so often rejected, not willing to have the darkness of my mind dispell'd by it.

Thou wilt judge me by those truths, which notwithstanding my corruptions have pierced to the bottom of my Soul, by that remorse which thou didst mingle with my most criminal pleasures, thereby to recall my heart ; but alas ! I always stifled them, that I might the more freely abandon my self to my Passions ; those *lying Vanities*.

And lastly, O my God, 'tis by the Book of my own Conscience, and not that of my ghostly Guide, by which thou (my Sovereign Judge) wilt pronounce my Sentence , at that terrible day,

day, when thou wilt declare my
Eternal Doom.

REFLECT. IX.

*She prays that out of his Mercy he
would be pleas'd to direct her con-
tinually in the straight Way which
leads unto him, and not permit
her to flatter her self, that she
has repented, when she is running
on still in the broad way.*

AH, Lord, since I have no way
left to appease my Judge,
and to avoid the Sentence of
Death, but to judge my self.

Grant that I may examin my
self before the Tribunal of thy
Justice. Grant that by a sincere
repentance and a hearty sorrow
for my sins, I may appease thy
Vengeance; and suffer me not
so to deceive my self in my
repent-

repentance, and thereby oblige thee to judge me a second time, & punish me in the day of thy fiery indignation.

○ Lord, inflame my heart with that spark of thy grace, which remains in my soul; and which sometimes makes it sigh within it self; change my pleasures into bitterness, my prosperity into affliction, that I may thereby be assur'd, thou hast chang'd thy hatred into love; and that I may not find in my sinful estate, a more deadly tranquillity, than in misery it self.

What can be more fatal to us, than to be deceiv'd in our Conversion, and in those Maxims of corrupted Mortality, which ruin more than Debauchery it self.

For what more dangerous sickness can there be, than that which makes us refuse all Remedies? In fine, what more destructive,

structive, than a reformation in appearance only ; which entices us out of the straight Way of Eternal Life , into the broad Rode of Sin ? Lord, once again, I beseech thee, chasten me not in thy displeasure , as thou dost those Reprobates , whom thou punishest with prosperity , because they would not partake of thy holy sufferings.

Remember, O my God, that I am but dust and ashes, a fitter object of thy compassion, than thy fury.

Have mercy upon me ; O Lord, have mercy upon me ; let thy mercy be proportionate to the hainousness of my offences, and thy infinite Loving-kindness, which has no other object , no other bounds, but thy mercy alone ; In fine, give me a Pardon which may blot out all my offences, render me worthy of the mercy of God.

REFLECT.

REFLECT. X.

Motives of Trust in God, and Distrust of our selves. Jesus Christ alone can confirm our Faith and strengthen our Hope.

CORRECT me, O Lord, but in mercy ; considering my frailty and the byas of my corrupt nature, which inclines me unto sin, and rivets my affections to the things of this World.

Have compassion on my indigence and inconstancy, which divert me from any thing that is good, and maugre the light of Faith, render all my good Works abortive. O God, who lovest us more than we can love our selves, and who out of thy infinite goodness, hast rescued me from a false hope, by which I should

should have been flattered into final impenitence, and thus hast sav'd me contrary to my own inclination ; Give me a solid hope in thy Divine Merits, let me consider them as the only Object of my Trust, and principally when the Devil tempts me to despair, and employs all his artifices, by the interposition of my sins and frailties, to eclipse the contemplation of thy Merits.

In this day of my affliction and distress (O my God) fix my eyes upon my blessed Saviour, dying on the Cross for my sins, and miserably torn by those *furrows which the Scourges made upon his back.* Let me consider, that thou didst endure all this to obtain pardon for my sins, and to encourage me to the taking up of thy Cross, upon which depends all my hopes of Salvation. Let me contemplate in
thy

thy Sacred Wounds, the right I pre
 a notorious sinner have, to hope thi
 in thy Mercies : Let the hope of sta
 a blessed Eternity, and the im- ma
 mutability of thy Promises, take
 off my Meditations from the vain tha
 and fleeting Enjoyments of this fel
 World, which hinder my Soul fel
 from aspiring to Eternal Feli in
 city. O

For thou knowest, O Lord, da
 how little stability there is in my sek
 best Desires, and how speedily the
 the impressions of thy Grace on th
 my heart, are defac'd by the vain
Idea's of worldly pleasure. my

How the hopes of some trifles, wh
 some vain lust puffs up my Soul; wi
 how the Honours and Applause
 of this World makes me giddy th
 and drunk with the fumes of Vain W
 glory. m

In fine, Lord, thou knowest Pa
 much better than I my self, how
 pliable I am to receive any im- m
 pression

pression of evil, how averse to any thing which is good, and how unstable in the ways of thy Commandments.

This is the reason, O Lord, that I put no confidence in my self; that my heart converts it self to thee in all its wants and in the day of adversity. To thee, O Lord, who enlightenest the darkest recesses of my mind, possess me with patience under the severest afflictions, and art the Anchor of my Soul.

Here is, Lord, my Merit, my Riches, and my Refuge, when the consideration of my wicked life terrifies me.

Here is, Lord, my comfort in this Vale of Tears and Spiritual Warfare, wherein my Soul is made the Scene of all sorts of Passions.

In fine, This makes me hope more than fear; and rely on thy Mercies,

Mercies, rather than dread of thy Justice.

Ah, Lord, since I know by experience, that thou art a sure Help to those that trust in thee, Teach me to relie upon thee in my greatest Extremities, to rejoyce in thy Chastisements, and to look upon them as marks of thy favour; Assist me patiently to undergo them, and assure me that thou wilt lay upon me no more than I am able to bear; but wilt take thy Rod from me, when it shall be convenient for the health of my Soul.

Let me be fully assur'd, that thy Grace will, in thy good time, remove all Obstacles, which obstruct my Salvation; that my Sufferings, and the Malice of my Enemies will have an end, but that thy Mercies endure for ever; that after I have fought the good fight here on Earth,

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Earth, I shall receive a Crown of glory in Heaven: for thou makest the Rays of thy Grace to shine upon the just and the unjust, which at the same time melt down the humble Soul into a sincere repentance, and harden the habitual and obdurate sinner; to the end that the one should not be tempted to Presume, or the other to Despair: but all remain in a continual dependence upon thy Grace.

Let me not then, O my God, be in the number of those, who will be astonished and confounded at the Great Day, because they have rejected thy Grace; for I cast my self wholly upon thy Mercy, which is infinite, and knows no bounds, without any reserve or confidence in my own merits.

But, O Lord, because Faith and Hope and all other Vertues
will

will avail me nothing, without Charity; because, tho' I could remove Mountains, and work all sorts of Miracles, yet my works would be dead and sinful, unless season'd by thy Love.

Give me therefore in the third place that Charity which is the Crown of all other Vertues, and the Soul of our Good Works. I would say, Lord, Give me a fervent and a faithful Love to thee, whereby I shall easily overcome all seeming impossibilities, and satisfy the thirst of my panting Soul, after a sincere conversion unto thee.

REFLECT.

REFLECT. XI.

*She Prays to God for a New Heart
inflam'd with his Love.*

FOR a Foundation of that Miraculous Work (which one very truly calls the chiefeſt Work of thy Grace) Create in me, O my God, a *New Heart*; a humble yet a reſolute, ſteady and courageous heart, eſtranged from the World and its Vanities, and in ſhort, a true Chriſtian heart; which may poſſeſs me with the love of thee, enable me to expoſe my Life and Fortunes for the Confession of thy Name, and render me Obedient to the Fooliſhneſs of the Croſs, in the miſt of a crooked and perverſe Generation, amongſt whom it is eſteem'd a ſcandal to be Religious.

A heart

A heart which will love thee in the midst of the severest Tryals, resisting the Concupiscence of the Flesh, mortifying its corrupt Appetites, and irregular Desires.

A heart which will love thee, when I am call'd upon to evidence that love, by loving my Enemies, and returning them *Good for Evil*.

A heart which for the love of thee, will deny it self when there is any competition between the Creature, and the Creatour; which will silence all the importunities of Nature, that it may hearken to the voice of thy Grace.

A heart which will love thee, when it must suffer for it; and will be content I should sacrifice my reputation and honour to thy Glory, in imitation of thy humble Life and opprobrious Death upon the Cross.

A heart

A heart which for the love of thee, will relinquish the favour of the Court, prefer thy Service, before the Splendour of my Family, or whatsoever is most dear to me; demonstrating hereby, that my love to thee surpasses that of the World.

Lastly, Grant, O my God, that I may love thee not only for thy benefits, when thou blestest me with prosperity and the abundance of good things in this World; but also when I am in disgrace, poverty, or any other Affliction: Learn me then to submit to the dispensations of thy Providence, and become more conformable to thy Divine Will.

For, O Lord, what testimonies can I give thee of my love, which will in the least answer thy love to me; nay, which are not infinitely surpass'd by

D those

so industrious to gratifie my Idol-passions, who never forgot any thing which might conduce to their satisfaction, should complain of the difficulty and impossibility of placing them upon their due object, and devoting my heart to the love of thee.

Lastly, Is it possible, that the soul which thou didst create to be the Temple of thy Divine Love, should not be perswaded to return unto thee, the center of its happiness, after it has wandred a thousand and a thousand times from the way of thy Commandments, unless thou art pleas'd to prepare its paths, and draw it to thy self with the cords of thy Grace? No, Lord, this is not reasonable: and therefore (maugre all the opposition I find in my corrupt nature in submitting my self to the easy yolk of thy Commandments,

thy

thy love which predominates in my Soul above the love of the world, the creature, or my self, shall unite me inseparably unto thee by the inexhaustible love of Jesus Christ.

By that love, which has taught me by experience, that there is nothing in this World worthy my friendship, nothing but continual troubles, and base ingratitude ; which has discover'd to me by these gentle Corrections, that thou art a jealous God, and requirest the sacrifice of my whole heart unto thee, in acknowledgment of thy infinite Mercies, my Infidelity, and the sacrilegious misplacing of my Affections.

Ah Lord, since thou requirest nothing to prepare me for the pardon of my sins, but the cultivating of my love and the conversion of my heart unto thee ;

D 3

Behold

Behold here is a heart ready to receive thy Commands, ready to obey thee, which is, truly to love thee; ready to undergo any thing, which conduces to the advancement of thy Glory, or the salvation of my Soul.

REFLECT. XIII.

That a Penitent Soul should not examine what Sins are Damnable and what not, but avoid all appearance of Evil, every thing which may displease God; lest indulging it self in lesser crimes, it relapse at last into Habitual Debauchery.

IF it is thy pleasure to make my Repentance in some measure agreeable to my Crimes, to prolong my life, and punish me in the same

same place where my Offences were committed ; If it is thy pleasure to make my Sins my Punishment, and those Lusts which I have hitherto idoliz'd the Executioners of thy Justice ; *My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed* : Nevertheless, Grant that I may be preserv'd in my Integrity thereby, that my present Aversion to sinful Pleasures may be an Antidote sufficient to defend me from the infected breath of popular Applause : that my Repentance may be more pleasing to thee, and profitable to my self.

But, O Lord, let me not only be preserved from those Notorious Crimes which this day render me the Object of thy Mercy ; but grant also, that I may hate Sin more for the Malignity of its Nature, than from the Dread of thy Vengeance ; let my Aversion

to it, proceed rather from thy love, than any respect to my self; that is, let me abhor it more for displeasing thee, than because it would be my ruin.

Let me not with the greatest part of the World, nicely weigh how much Carnal Liberty I may take, and yet continue in a state of salvation; but let me avoid every thing which displeases thee, as well as those grosser acts of sin, which will certainly damn my soul.

For what is more impious, O my God, than to say, I know that this Action will displease thee, that this Temptation is alluring, that these Pleasures obstruct the Emanations of thy Grace; and in short, that the Vanities of this World are at *enmity to the life of Godliness*; and yet I am resolv'd to venter on them, to disregard the all-seeing

seeing Eye of a jealous God, the Remorse of my own Conscience : and all this because I am assured, that God is a merciful God, that he loves me, and is willing to pass by my Offences.

For is not this Way of Reasoning us'd by the greatest part of those servile Souls, whose Religious Actions proceed more from fear of the Devil, than out of love God ?

May not this Neglect of thy Grace, (which these Men esteem so small an Offence) grieve thy Holy Spirit, and become the Occasion of their Eternal Reprobation ?

For the Devil, by tempting us at first to smaller Crimes, insinuates himself into our Affections, and by degrees renders the most detestable sins familiar ; this he knows is the surest way

to destroy us, for by little and little it weakens the love and fear of God in our Souls, it gives him possession of our hearts, and at last *delivers them up unto him for a prey.*

For who knows, but this variety of company, this vain and frothy conversation which fills my heart with frivolous Desires, and weakens the Influences of thy Grace, may in the end seduce me from the simplicity of thy Word, and the observation of thy Holy Law?

Who knows but thou mayest leave me to my self, when thou perceivest that my Disobedience and Ingratitude towards thee, proceeds from the abuse of thy Grace?

In fine, Who knows but the Splendour of Worldly Pomp, which is continually before my eyes; which I behold with so much

much complacency, and those Maxims of Carnal Policy which are perpetually sounding in my ears; may at last render me forgetful of those Solemn Protestations, which but a few days ago, I made unto thee; when with Tears and Sighs, I so earnestly besought thee, to *have Mercy on me, and to deliver me from the jaws of Death.*

REFLECT.

REFLECT. XIV.

She prays unto God instantly, that he would be pleas'd to knock off those Chains which unite her Affections to the Creature; to grant her fresh Recruits of his Mercy, and Grace to make the right use of them.

AH Lord, who art terrible only to stubborn and impenitent Offenders, let not my Ingratitude divert the benign designs of thy Mercy unto my Soul; let not that sickness (by which thou didst intend to awaken me and bring me nearer to thy self) harden my heart, and *fill up the measure of my sins.*

Let not the return of my Life and Health bring along with it those Vicious Habits and that Inordinate Love to the Pumps
and

and Vanities of the World ,
 which I so passionately renounc'd
 when the Terrors of Death
 were upon me , when the Sight
 of my Sins and the Torments of
 Hell made all my Joints tremble,
 and my Knees smite together.

Deliver me also, from my self,
 O my God , from that natural
 inclination of my Will to all that
 is Evil, and that aversion to
 Good, which from time to time
 prevails with me to defer my Re-
 pentance.

Make thy Arm bear and break
 asunder those Bonds which unite
 my Affections too close to the
 Creature , and engage me too
 earnestly in the love of my
 self.

Hear me when I cry unto thee
 for fresh supplis of thy Mercy,
 and *redeem me from the vain con-*
versation of the World.

But

But above all, let that Grace, that Love, that Bounty, (with which I am almost overwhelmed) kindly operate upon my Soul; and after they have made me sensible, how much a stranger my heart is to those Resolutions, which the Terror of thy approaching Judgments extorted from me; then let them accomplish those Gracious Purposes, for which they were sent by thy Indulgent Providence.

Lastly, Let not the hardness of my heart constrain thy Mercy to give place to Justice, let it not render thy Fatherly Corrections ineffectual, or provoke thee to leave me to my self, and give me up to my Unmortifi'd Affections: Grant me (with Tears I beseech thee) Grant me *thy Love*; for without it I have no Strength, no Merit, and by its possession I shall be able to surmount

mount all the Difficulties which obstruct my Conversion, and to persevere to the end in the Way of thy Commandments.

REFLECT. XV.

What kind of Life that Person ought to lead who is under a Necessity of Conversing much in the World ; that 'tis her Duty to resist whatsoever is contrary to the Commands of Jesus Christ.

ENlighten the Faculties of my Soul, O my God, with that Divine Love, which will shew me the Vanity of these transient Enjoyments, and enable me patiently to bear my **DISGRACEFUL BANISHMENT.**

Imprint in my Mind such lively *Idea's* of thy Mercy, and such grateful Resentments of thy Benefits,

nefits, as may be always before my eyes, and produce a real change in my heart; a sure sign of my amendment by thy healthful Corrections: Let a Good Life be the effect of my earnest desires to give my self up to thee, let me chuse to die a thousand times rather than offend thee; and let me be found, at thy coming, amongst those Wise Virgins who have *trimm'd their Lamps with Good Works.*

And tho' for the most part those persons who would pass from one Extream to another in a Moment, from the most degenerate Debauchery, to the highest Pitch of Devotion, are unsuccessful in their endeavours, and finish nothing, because they undertake too much; yet I cannot give bounds to my desires, I cannot but wish to love thee as much as I am able: 'tis this which
above

above all things I thirst after ;
and to which end, I beseech thee,
Enliven my Impotent Endeavours
with thy Grace.

I will not defer my Repen-
tance, O my God, until the
Night of thy Justice overtakes
me, when no man can work ;
but I will be up and be doing, as
soon as ever the day of thy Grace
springs from on high, and en-
deavour to work out my Salva-
tion: I will not ask counsel of
my Lusts, or deliberate with my
self, whether 'tis time to forsake
my vicious conversation, and be-
come a new creature: Nor am
I so vain as to think my self ca-
pable of great matters; For I
am conscious of my own Wants,
my Sluggishness, and my incon-
stancy, and therefore with eyes
lift up to Heaven, I patiently ex-
pect the dawning of thy love, and
the gentle influences of thy grace
upon my soul. I will

I will begin to magnifie thy Mercies amongst those who maintain a continual Trafick of Sin and Vanity, with whom my Discourse us'd to be about Riches, Honours, Pleasures, and Prosperity.

I will declare to those persons who worship nothing but their Interest, that thou art my God, the only Object of my Adoration; that in the enjoyment of thy Favour, consists all my Riches, my Grandeur, and my Happiness; that all I have is in thy hands, and that when thou hast consummated the Great Work of my Conversion, I shall be more happy, than if I had Conquer'd all the Kingdoms of the World.

I will forsake that frothy and effeminate Company with whom I have lost so much precious time; which I will endeavour to redeem by convincing them, that
the

the unprofitable, vain and idle course of life, which they look upon as their privilege, will destroy the health of their Everlasting Souls.

If I cannot attain to be Eminently Religious, I will endeavour to be as good as I can; if I cannot produce the testimonies of an ardent Affection, I will dedicate to thee my Infant Love; if my Faith is not so Active as that of the humble *Centurian*, (which inclined thee to give a present return unto his Prayers) yet I will take advice of thy Ministers, and with united Prayers, Implore the Augmentation of it.

That I may live up to those Religious Principles, which thou hast planted in my Soul, I will dread the Company of those debauch'd Wretches, who glory in their Wickedness, and (as the
holy

Holy Scripture speaks) *have not God in all their thoughts.*

Yes, Lord, I will break off all engagements with those profess'd Libertines, whose society instills Irreligion into our Minds, and is a blemish to the most unspotted Reputation; who puff us up with such an opinion of our selves, as merits the desertion of thy grace; and guild over their Monstrous Vices with the specious Names of good Nature and Honour: Tho' their Persons and Humour may be agreeable to me, yet I am resolv'd faithfully to perform those Vows which I have made unto thee, O my God; and that henceforwards I will not maintain any strict Correspondence, Familiarity or Friendship with them. For certainly the hating of those who hate thee, is but a small acknowledgment of thy infinite love.

REFLECT.

REFLECT. XVI.

That she should associate her self with those persons who truly fear God, and that she ought not to entangle her self again in those things which the World calls State, Riches, Fortune, and Grandeur.

O Lord, in whose hands are the hearts of men, and who turnest them whether soever thou pleasest; change the inclinations of my Soul, and sanctifie my Love, that in the choice of my Friends, I may regard more thy Grace, than any Natural Endowments; rather the edifying of my self, and the seasoning my heart with thy holy Truths, than my own Diversifement.

For

For thou knowest, Lord, how insensibly those things which I frequently behold, make impressions upon my mind ; how conformable I am to the company with which I converse ; and how wonderfully good or bad Examples influence my Life and Conversation.

Grant therefore, O my Lord and my God, that I may take delight in the Company of Virtuous and Religious Men ; that instead of talking about the World and its Vanities, my discourse may be concerning Eternity, thy Grace, thy Greatness, and those infinite Mercies which thou hast been pleased to bestow upon my Soul ; and if those impressions which sin has left upon my mind, should for the present render me averse to these innocent Pleasures ; if the taint of my corrupt Nature should dis-

relish

relish these Diversions which yield more solid satisfaction, than the most sensual enjoyments of this World; then I beseech thee, to enlighten my Understanding with thy Grace and strengthen my Faith, to withhold me from gratifying my inordinate Appetites, to work in me a repentance for those sins which render me incapable of the sweet Comforts of thy *Holy Spirit*.

For, O Lord, if thou dost not expect that I should exercise much Rigour on my Body, 'tis because I should be more fervent in Spirit, and mortifie my corrupt Appetites the more; for a deep sense of thy Death and Sufferings, is absolutely necessary to restore the health of my Soul.

Now seeing the best way to rectifie my warp'd desires, is to bend them towards the contrary extream,

extream, Grant that the byas of my corrupt Nature may never provoke on me, to bestow so much as one favourable look on my divorced Lusts; for 'tis but reasonable that I should punish my self for my too earnest pursuits of sensual pleasure, by mortifying those Irregular Appetites, and denying my self even Lawful Diversions; it is but just, that I who have trifled away so much time on the Stage of the World, should retire my self from those pleasures, which are the fewel of my inordinate lusts; and deny my self, the World and all its pleasures, that I may be truly the Disciple of the *Lord Jesus*.

Let the certain assurance of a future Life, O my God, demonstrate to me the Frailty and Vanity of those things which we call State, Wealth, Fortune, and Grandeur; Let me not (with
the

the greatest part of the World) engage all the force of my Affections in the pursuit of them ; as if there were no future Life, Happiness, or Eternity : Let me esteem them according to their true value ; but let me place my Affections only upon that solid good, where true Joys are to be found. For how can any real Contentment proceed from such empty Trifles? How can any lasting satisfaction be built upon such fading Enjoyments? which make themselves wings and fly away, when we think we have the surest possession of them.

Lastly , Let me contemplate thy Works in the Government of the World ; in which (as in the Scene of a Comedy) Providence orders the Persons, disposes the Riches and Honours, and rolls asleep the generality of Mankind ; who being rouz'd up

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at

at the end of the Act, stand amaz'd, that they have been all the while in a Dream, that the gaudy Apparitions are vanish'd, and nothing left but dust and smoak. Yea, Lord, I confess that after I have thoroughly ranfack'd all the stores of sensual Enjoyments, I cannot find any real satisfaction or lasting pleasure; but only in thy Love and thy Service.

REFLECT

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REFLECT. XVII.

That Charity towards our Neighbour obliges us carefully to avoid not only every Action which may be injurious to his Life, Goods, and Reputation; but also detracting Speeches, and foolish jesting.

O That my Soul might be inspir'd with thy Love, O my God; that it might be my only Treasure, my Glory, and my Delight; that those chaste and Divine Pleasures which flow from it, might enlighten my Understanding and allure my Will to cleave unto thee; that it might work in me a hearty sorrow for my past Offences, and a holy fear of thy Divine Majesty; that it might take possession of my Soul, and not endure the

most darling lust to lurk therein. O that my love to my Neighbour might in some measure answer thy love to me, that I might love his Soul above my own Life, and never be prevail'd upon, for the gain of the whole World, to wound my Conscience, by injuring him either in estate, or good name.

But since generally nothing is esteem'd a breach of Charity towards our Neighbour, but such open Violence, or abusive Language, as a sober *Heathen* would blush at; since few persons make a conscience of those Jears, which touch a man to the quick, those Genteel ways of less'ning his Reputation, by insinuating his Frailties, and ridiculing his Humour, because 'tis done in sport, and for diversion of the Company: Therefore, I beseech thee, O Lord, open my eyes, and con-

vince

vince me, that these sins (which I am apt to call pardonable Infirmities) displease thee the more, in that they are agreeable to our corrupt Natures, and the genuine off spring of self-love.

Let me heartily detest this mischievous diversion, to which I have been too much given up; let my sorrow for this sin in some measure equal the pleasure I took in it; and let that which was the great Incentive of my Guilt, produce a Fountain of Tears to blot it out.

For is it not highly reasonable, O Lord, that I should bewail that Mirth whereby I have injur'd my Neighbour, and undone my self; and that Laughter which has cost me my Soul, and the Favour of my God? Is it not just, that seeing I cannot make any extraordinary demonstrations of my Repentance and Love to

E 3 thee;

thee ; I should testify the sincerity of my Intentions , by abstaining from every thing which gratifies my Natural Corruption; that by a discreet reserv'dness in my discourse for the future, I should endeavour to make amends for the former lavishness of my Tongue; and by casting out all those sins which have offended thee, invite thy return into the Temple of my Soul ?

Whensoever therefore, O my God, I have any desires to conform my self to the World, to gratifie my depraved Appetites, or to shew the gayety of my Humour; whensoever these sinful delights come into my mind, and begin to blow up the sparks of my corruption; whensoever I perceive these motions of complacency towards my self, and envy against my Neighbour, these ferments of my passions, and melancholy

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holy distemper of my mind,
 which if in the least encouraged,
 will easily get the better of me:
 Then let me consider, O Lord,
 that if I do not carefully suppress
 these first motions to sin, I resign
 up my Soul to its most inveterate
 Enemies: and on the contrary,
 if I nip them in the bud, if I
 sacrifice my passions and my plea-
 sures unto thee, I shall encline
 thee to have Mercy upon me,
 and to blot out my Offences, I
 shall give thee the Homage of a
 contrite and penitent Heart, *In*
which thou art well pleased.

Shew me therefore, that *these*
are the Fruits worthy of Repentance ;
 these are the Restitutions thou
 requirest of me, and the choicest
 Victims my love can offer up.

REFLECT. XVIII.

That she ought to desire of God the Gift of Prayer ; which is the only means the Soul can make use of to confirm its wavering Resolutions.

O God, who takest delight in rewarding that servant, *who has been faithful in a few things*, supply the indigency of my love out of the abundance of thy goodness ; Let its shallow streams be swallow'd up in the vast Ocean of thy Divine Charity, lose themselves in it, and be mixed with it, that so it may be always conformable unto thine.

For I confess my frailty, that my Heart is an ungrateful and barren Soil, producing nothing but Briers and Thorns, unless cultivated by thy Grace ; Water
it

it therefore, O Lord, with the Dew of Heaven, which gives fruitfulness to the Plants, and paints the Flowers; which inclines our wills, and affects our hearts; which after it has produc'd in our Soul, *Works worthy of Repentance*, protects them from those scorching beams, the flames of our lusts, and preserves them safe unto the Harvest.

This is the comfortable hope and earnest desire of thy poor servant, that which sustains him in this tedious Pilgrimage, whilst he languishes with expectation of the *Beatifical Vision*.

But that thy Inspirations may have the desired effect upon my Soul, that I may receive them with futable affections, that I may prepare my heart for so great favours which thou art pleas'd to bestow upon it. With my eyes and hands lift up to

Heaven, I will meet these Blessings, I will forsake every sin which unfits me for them, and do all the good thy Grace shall enable me to perform. And that the streams of thy Mercy may never fail me, a poor thirsty sinner, I will continually encrease them with my Tears; that is to say, Lord, an hearty repentance and an affectionate grief for having so often offended thee.

And since Prayer is the Channel by which thou conveyest thy Grace and thy Light into our Souls, since it is the most fragrant Incense I can offer up unto thee, for obtaining of fresh Mercies; teach me to Pray unto thee with Reverence, with the Adoration of all my Faculties, and with my whole Heart.

And that I may the more devoutly perform this Duty, shew me the Necessity, and the Advan-

tag

tage of it, take away that surprise, which the very name of Prayer is apt to produce in me, and shew me that 'tis not so difficult, so tiresome a Duty as some persons represent it to themselves, who are ignorant *that as in thy House there are many Mansions*, so there are different ways of conversing with thee; some of which require only the sincerity of our Hearts.

REFLECT.

REFLECT. XIX.

*What the Nature of Prayer is,
and how faithful a Penitent Soul
ought to be to its Resolutions of
constantly performing this Holy
Exercise.*

TIs true, Lord, that the Prayer of a Devout Soul, (who has retir'd himself from the World, and is fill'd with the Joys of thy Holy Spirit) is like a Box of precious Ointment, which as soon as ever it approaches the fire, sends forth a fragrant Odour: and that the Groans of a poor Creature, who lies groveling on the Earth, who only crawls on in the path of Vertue are like troubled Waters, which must distil drop by drop, before they will afford any useful Liquor.

Never-

Nevertheless, O my God, it seems most reasonable (that since Prayer is only a lifting up of our hearts unto thee, in which we lay before thee our Wants and beg Supplies) I say, it seems most reasonable to me, that she who is turmoiled with the Affairs of the World, who finds her self in a languishing Condition, harrafs'd by a thousand Miseries, and surrounded with a thousand Dangers; is under a more pressing necessity of Praying to thee, than the Religious person who is hedg'd about with thy Mercies.

It appears highly reasonable to me, not only that she is under a greater necessity, but also that she is better disposed to perform this Duty of Prayer, than one who is more habitually devout; because she cannot chuse
but

but do it, whether she thinks of it or no: For if 'tis natural for a poor man to ask an Alms, for a sick man to bemoan himself, and for one in danger to lift up his eyes towards Heaven; How much more natural is it for that Soul to pray unto his God, who is continually press'd with these three Calamities; who is always poor, always sick, and always in danger, the three chief hinges upon which this Duty turns.

Therefore that I may delight in this Angelic Exercise, teach me, O my God, that Prayer is nothing else but a pleasing converse between the Soul and its Creatour; a Torch which dispels the darkness of its understanding, and a Glass which truly represents all its imperfections.

An Eloquent Preacher, who Imprints the Law of God in our Minds; a faithful Guide, who conducts us safely through the straight Way of our Salvation; a sweet Sleep, which gives the Soul repose in the Arms of God's Providence; a Holy Joy, which renders sinful pleasures nauseous, and all sensual delights insipid, in comparison with those of the Cross.

A comfortable contemplation of our latter end, which tames our Appetites with the thoughts of Death, which sweetens his approaches with the Expectation of Eternity, and an ardent Desire of the *Beatifical Vision*.

Lastly, 'Tis the Crucifixion of our Passions, the Mortification of our Self-love, and the Resurrection of the Grace of Jesus Christ in our Souls.

Prepare

Prepare therefore the Palate of my Soul, O my God, that it may relish this delicious Manna: For the only way to persevere to the end in thy Commandments, in the midst of a crooked and perverse Generation, to slight the World and all its Vanities, and to love thee above all things, is to converse with thee by Prayer, not only as with our Father and our God, but as with our most affectionate and familiar Friend. I would say, Lord, the only way to lay before thee all those Passions which tyrannise in our Minds, all those terrible Objects which fright us, all those Frailties which humble us, all those Sorrows which consume us, all those Grievs which rend us; and to delineate all the confusion of our Minds, is to come unto thee, (as holy *David* did) and lay
all

all our Afflictions, all the burthen of our Souls, and all our Prayers at the Foot-stool of thy Throne.

For alas ! if our Self-love takes so much pleasure in relating our Afflictions to our impotent Friends, who can do nothing but hear and pity them ; how much greater a comfort should it be, that we are encourag'd to pour out our Wants before a God, who, if he pleases, can help us ; who is oftentimes more delighted to see a Soul humbled by its Misery, than elated with the Eminent Instances of its Vertue.

Incline me therefore, O my God, to spend some moments every day at the Foot-stool of thy Throne, and let me not lie poring on a Picture, or repeat my Prayers from a Book which I do not understand ; but let the Subject of my Devotions be,
my

my own Wants, and whatsoever may render me more humble. For I am too sensible of my own Imperfections, to distract my Mind with other Objects, besides my own Misery and the infinite Mercy of my God.

REFLECT. XX.

That the Misery to which Sin has reduc'd us, ought to be the Subject of our Prayers, and that 'tis good to begin them with the Considerations of the stupendous Mystery of our Saviour's Passion.

ALas! how can I meditate on my Vileness, who am puffed up with Pride, who can only Pray unto thee, to break off my Ambition and Vain-glory, which like unmanagable Horses,
precipitous

precipitate my Soul into the
Abyſs of thy fiery Indignation.

How can I hearken to thy
Word, or taſte the ſweet Com-
forts of thy Holy Spirit, who
am ſurrounded with a thouſand
Paſſions, a thouſand Vanities,
which diſtract my thoughts,
when I come to appear before
thee? What can I do more, than
Groan within my ſelf, when, as
the Royal *Pſalmiſt* has it, *my*
feet are hurt with the fetters of ſin,
and I am in Captivity to my Un-
mortifi'd Affections; until the
gentle Influences of thy Grace
create in my heart a love to thy
Law.

How can I liſt up my ſelf to
Heaven, whiſt my Affections
are groveling on the Earth? How
can I contemplate thy Greatneſs
and thy Excellencies, whiſt my
mind is diſtracted by its own
Miſeries, and aſtoniſhed at that
imminent

imminent danger , which only gives me space to beg thy Mercy, and to say, with the Apostles, *Lord, save us, or we perish.*

Nevertheless, O my Lord, since the remembrance of thy bitter Passion ought to be deeply engraven upon my Soul ; Grant, O my God, that the beginning of my Prayer may have a respect to that adorable Mystery , that my heart may be mollifi'd by the consideration of thy sufferings, render'd more susceptible of the impressions of thy Love and thy Grace ; and Meditate with more benefit on its own Vanity.

REFLECT.

REFLECT. XXI.

That we ought not to be weary of Praying, because we do not find present Comfort, but that we should be faithful to our Resolutions, and have recourse to this Holy Exercise, when we are wrack'd by the greatest Pains, and distress'd by the severest Afflictions.

OH! that I could be so constant in my Resolutions, as every day to prostrate myself at the Foot-stool of thy Throne, at that set-time which I have consecrated unto thee, when thou art pleas'd to give me Audience; and let nothing divert me from performing *this one thing necessary.*

Let

Let me constantly throw myself at thy feet, in whatsoever condition my Soul may be; to the end that when those distractions and that barrenness of my mind hinders me from fixing my thoughts upon thee, or speaking of any thing, but those Vanities which have taken possession of my heart; then the labour which I undergo, those painful pangs which I endure, and those irksom attempts which I make, to pour forth a Prayer, may render it more acceptable unto thee.

Let me not fancy, that thou hast abandoned me, because my mind is sometimes overwhelmed with the load of my Corruption, because at such a time as this I cannot form so much as one good thought: For I will still look up and pray unto thee; I will say with that great King,

King, the holy *David*, *I am like a beast before thee*, without spirit, without speech, and without consideration.

Tho' I cannot perform this Duty with a steady intention of mind, yet I will not depart from the Foot-stool of thy Throne; I will pray unto thee with my Heart and with my Will, I will put my trust in thy Goodness; and tho' thou may'st not for the present unite my Soul unto thy self, by the sweet influences of thy Grace, yet thou wilt accept of it in this deplorable condition, and esteem it as a testimony of my sincere Affection, that it cleaves unto thee, as well when thou art pleased to withdraw thy Comforts, as when it enjoys thy ravishing Consolations.

But,

But, good Lord, let me not only Pray unto thee with my Understanding, and with my Tongue, but also with my Heart; Let me not only Pray unto thee in my Closet, and in the Church, where the consideration of thy Divine Presence inspires me with Devotion; but grant, O my God, that by Acts of Faith, Hope, and Charity, I may consecrate unto thee, the Oratory of my Heart; in which I will offer up the Sacrifice of Prayer; For the Devotion of a true Christian is not confin'd to Words, but extends it self unto his Thoughts and Actions, in all Places and upon all Occasions.

I will do this in the midst of my Worldly Business, nay in the midst of my Diversions, when retiring my self into that Closet of my Breast, which is dedica-

dedicated to thee alone, where no eye but thine sees me; I will address my Prayer unto thee.

When I find my self most expos'd to Temptation, when I have the greatest sense of my own Weakness; when Self-love most tyrannizes over me, and the sweet poyson of pleasure most allures my Soul; then I will sigh most fervently unto thee, and without waiting for a fuitable place, or more convenient time, I will presently lay open the Wounds of my Soul, and beseech thy help.

This shall be at the beginning and end of all my Actions, in the Morning and at Night; in the midst of my Journeys my heart shall take thee for its *Polar* Star; it shall rely upon thee in every condition, yield it self up to thy Conduct, and implore the succours of thy Grace. And
 F this

this will be done with the greater ease, because I shall better express my own wants and my intire dependance on thy Mercy, by one single sigh, which proceeds from the bottom of my Oppress'd Heart, than by the most Prolix Devotions.

I will join with thy Saints, and praise thee in thy Sanctuary with my Lips and with my Voice; but I will also Pray unto thee with Sighs and Groans unutterable; In my greatest dangers, and under the most violent pains, I will look up unto thee, and in all the actions of my life, with holy *David*, *I will have thee always before my eyes.*

REFLECT.

REFLECT. XXII.

The indispensable Necessity of Prayer, without which 'tis impossible to have any serious thoughts of our Salvation.

WHat is that Soul, O my God, who lives in this World without Prayer? I speak not of those persons who only mind their Pleasures, and providing for their Bodies, who are Christians in Name only, and may be more fitly rank'd amongst brute Beasts, than reasonable Creatures.

But I mean those who frequently reflect upon themselves, who consider to what end a Rational Soul was given them, and dominion over the rest of the Creation.

F 2 Who

Who consider that there is a God ; I mean , are convinc'd , that none but Fools doubt of it.

Who consider how it comes to pass , that those persons who believe the Histories of *Alexander* and *Cesar* , yet question that of Jesus Christ.

Who consider whether that Faith which was propagated by twelve poor Fisher-men , and confirm'd by an infinite number of Miracles wrought in the sight of all nations , can now reasonably be call'd in question.

Who consider whether that *Army of Martyrs* , who seal'd this Faith with their Blood , are not a sufficient *cloud of Witnesses* to evince its Truth.

Who consider whether all those Prophecies in the Old Testament , concerning the Coming
and

and Kingdom of the Messiah, which have been punctually accomplished, ought to pass for Fables.

Who consider those incomprehensible Mysteries, the Effects of the Omnipotent Grace of Jesus Christ, and his infinite Love towards us his poor Creatures.

Lastly, Who consider all God's wonderful Works upon their Souls, that admirable Conduct, which at the same enlightneth our Understandings, by his Fatherly Corrections, and preserves us, which by his Divine Providence orders all things for some end best known unto himself; and makes every thing tend to the welfare and advantage of his Elect.

'Tis for these persons (who having the clouds of their Understandings dispell'd by the light of these indubitable truths, yet are presently blinded by the vanities of the World) 'tis for their Good, as well as my own, I consider, That a Soul in this World, without Prayer, without Reflection, and without Reliance upon God's Providence, is like a Ship in the midst of a Tempest, without a Pilot, like a Man who fancies himself wonderfully enlightned and yet is blinded with the thickest Mists of Ignorance and Error.

He is like that person who fancies he knows God, has Faith, Hope, and Charity; and yet adores his Idol-Passions; he is like a Traveler in a strange Country, without either Guide or Compass, who the faster he walks,

walks, the farther he wanders from his Home.

He is like that person who being tumbled into the bottom of a deep Pit, yet will not make use of the Cord which is let down to draw him up.

Lastly, He is like that foolish builder, who endeavours to erect a Magnificent Pallace, without a Foundation.

For how can he work out his Salvation, *who has not God in all his thoughts?* How can he observe his Laws, and obey his Commandments, who never thinks on them? How can he bridle his Tongue, and all his head-strong Passions, without God's Grace? And how can he obtain this Grace, who will not be at the pains to ask it? How can he avoid falling into Despair, who goes on in a sinful course of

F 4 life,

life, which he knows will end in the Damnation of his Soul? Who either uses the most preposterous means imaginable to still his Conscience; that is, by putting out of his mind the thoughts of another Life, of an Eternity, and of a God; or else doth not place his trust in him.

In fine, How can he be a good Christian and love Jesus Christ, who does not know him, does not consider that he dy'd for us, does not meditate on his Life, his Actions, or his Holy Gospel?

REFLECT.

REFLECT. XXIII.

She desires of God the Gift of Prayer, that she may make Death, Eternity, and God's Judgments the Subject of it ; which are the proper means to season our Souls with the Fear of God.

AH Lord, since I am convinc'd, that Prayer (which is nothing but the lifting up of our Souls unto thee, our continual endeavour to pluck down the strongholds of Satan, and establish the Kingdom of Jesus Christ) is so easie, so necessary and so profitable a Duty.

Since I am assur'd by thy Holy Word, and the Examples of Holy Men, that 'tis a floating plank which will bear up my Soul in all the storms of this life, and

F 5 convey

convey it safe into the blessed Haven of Eternity; that is, to the Heavenly Jerusalem which is above, where all tears shall be wiped away from our eyes, and we shall enjoy those pleasures which are at thy right-hand, for evermore.

Give me an earnest Desire and Delight in Praying to thee; let it be as pleasant and familiar, as ever the Vanities of the World have been, for which I have so often hazzarded the Salvation of my Soul.

But since Death is the end of all things, and the most profitable Subject of our Meditations; Grant, O my God, that I may daily consider my last end; when to speak in the Words of the Holy Scripture) my breath goeth forth, I return to the earth, and in that very day my thoughts perish.

That

That Time which *will come like a Thief in the Night*, and seize upon our Souls.

That Time after which there will be no more space for Repentance.

That Time for which we ought to be prepared all the days of our life, that we may not be surprised thereby.

That Time on which depends the Happiness or Misery of our Souls to all Eternity.

O Death ! how dreadful are thy Approaches to those persons who never thought of thee, who plac'd all their Happiness in the Goods of this World ?

O Death ! how terrible art thou to those men to whom thou art the end of their Happiness, and the beginning of their Sorrows.

In

In short, By which they are deprived of all the Enjoyments of this World, of that Body which they Idoliz'd, of a Voluptuous Life and the gratification of their Inordinate Appetites. I say, How terrible art thou to those, who never knew God, but only to offend him?

But then how much more amazing is the Contemplation of Eternity, to those men who never persu'd any other Happiness, but what this life affords; who never thought of Repentance and forsaking their sins, until they were disabled for the enjoyment of their Lusts, and render'd incapable to receive the impressions of any other Passion, but Fear?

O Eternity, Eternity ! how exquisitely Tormenting are the thoughts of thee to that person,

son, who beholds Hell ready to receive him for the punishment of his sins, who dares not Hope in God's Mercy, but would think himself sufficiently happy, could he but have the same end *with the Beasts that perish.*

And finally, O Eternity! How dreadful are the thoughts of thee to that person, who at his last hour, finds that he cannot Love God, and yet cannot chuse but Fear him.

But, O blessed Eternity! how comfortable art thou to that person who has led a good Life, and mortifi'd his Corruptions in this World.

To a Sinner who is Converted, has Repented of his Sins, and has a good Foundation of Hope in thy Mercy.

To

To him who is accustomed
to die daily, and has forsaken
the World and its Vanities,
before he is compell'd to it
by the unalterable Law of Na-
ture.

In fine, to him who sincerely
loves God , and enjoys in this
life the earnest of Eternal Hap-
piness.

REFLECT.

REFLECT. XXIV.

That she will every Day offer up unto God the Sacrifice of Thanksgiving, for opening her Eyes and converting her unto himself. That she will Write down these Resolutions which she made at the time of her Conversion; to the end that she may be always mindful of these Obligations she has laid upon her self, and by which she must be Judg'd at the Last Day.

AH! Lord, who in the working thy Miracles dost always regard some great end, Hast thou not restored my Health, that thou may'st accomplish the blessed purposes of thy Grace upon my Soul, that by a thorough conversion of my Heart unto thee,

thee, I might pass from this state of death, (or as the Royal Prophet speaks) *from the Terrors of Hell*, to such a Religious course of Life, as those Devout Souls led, who now sleep in the Lord; who did not presume on thy Mercy, and from thence defer their Repentance to the last Moment?

Yes, Lord, I acknowledge thy Mercy in the midst of thy Judgments, and the constant protection of thy Providence in all the Accidents of my life.

For this is the Reason why thou hast so much Afflicted me, so much Distress'd me, so often chang'd my Desires and my Resolutions, that hereby thou may'st wean me from my self.

And

And therefore that I may maintain an inviolable Fidelity towards thee for the future, that I may serve thee, that I may love thee, and rather die a thousand times than return again to my former Vain Conversation; I have Writ this Paper with my own hand, as a Register of thy Mercies, my most Intimate Resolutions, and all thy Adorable Truths: That if at any time I should forget my self, I might hereby be put in mind of my Duty, and that Model of Holy Living I have resolv'd on; if my Faith should falter, my Hope should languish, or my Charity grow cold, and my Corruptions begin to struggle in my Soul; the reading of these Prayers and the contemplation of thy Bounty and thy Grace, might reduce them to their former temper. That

That if at any time I should forget that Agony which the consideration of thy Justice produc'd in my Mind, when like a condemn'd Malefactor on the Scaffold, I was impatient to be freed from the Terrors of Death; I might recollect my self by reading of these Reflections, which I writ upon this self-same Bed, where the Ministers on one side, and the Physicians on the other, gave me little Hope of my Life, or my Salvation; where I lay helpless, like a poor Beast, and could do nothing in this Great Work.

O my God of my Salvation! in whose hands are my Soul and my Eternal Happiness, who didst reprieve me from the Grave, and didst crown me with thy Mercies, and fill'd my Soul with Holy Desires, *who hast renew'd my Age,*

as that of an Eagle ; who hast promised , that thy Anger shall not endure for ever againit those who fear thee ; that thou wilt not punish them according to their deserts , but wilt put away their Offences as far as the East is from the West ; who assurest us , that like as a Father pittieeth his Children , so thou wilt have compassion on us ; because thou knowest our weakness , and that we are but dust ; that our most steady Resolutions are but as a Traveler who tarrieth but for a night , and as the morning dew , which soon passeth away .

Lastly , Who workest good out of the evil of our sins , and who alone canst convert me : I beseech thee therefore to turn my Heart .

Because my Soul is humbled and overwhelmed with shame and grief for displeasing thee .

Because

Because my Soul puts its trust
in thee ; and languishes after the
enjoyment of thy presence.

But above all, O my God ,
hear my humble Supplication ,
because I have made thee the only
Object of my Love, and because
*thy Mercy rejoices over all thy
Works.*

Finally , Lord , have pity on
me, because I am poor and mi-
serable, and thou art Infinitely
Rich and Merciful.

THE END.

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